

Holiness unto the Lord

Separation (“holiness unto the Lord”) is evident throughout the Scriptures. It is a subject not written by man, though men neglect, ignore and may take it lightly in many areas of life. Separation is found in the very character of God. Both God's Old Testament people and His Church are reminded to “be holy” because He is holy (Leviticus 11:44; I Peter 1:14-16). Holiness is separation unto God and from the unbelieving world. Godly people are reminded in the Scriptures that when they respect the holiness of God, He honors them (I Samuel 2:30).

There are many things in Scripture which God, in His holiness, has “set apart” (separated) for Himself. Under the law, He declared a day to be set apart as a day unlike the other six days of the week (Exodus 20:9, 10). In the Old Testament God set apart the Priest who was to live a holy life of service in the Tabernacle and the Temple—places set apart specifically for worship. Today, God has set apart His own people from the ungodly. The believer today is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and is the temple of God. The temple of God is not to be defiled but is to be kept for God to use (I Corinthians 3:16, 17).

Today God expects no less of His people than He has in the past. One would think as they look about and see what is happening in personal lives, churches and various Christian organizations that God has relaxed His Word and expectations of men. That is a false assumption, because God has never changed His Word despite what may be promoted. He still demands holiness, and men who are deceived into thinking that God does not expect His own to be holy today will be held accountable as to how they have applied all of His Word to their lives (I Corinthians 3:16-18).

Personally, we are to “be not conformed to this world” (Romans 12:1, 2), to “love not the world” (I John. 2:15, 16) and to have “no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians. 5:11). It is not “legalistic” to “be holy,” but it is an act of obedience to the Lord; and His richest blessings are on those who do obey Him. Holiness does not just happen—it is a deliberate choice the child of God makes to submit and be dedicated unto the Lord. It involves careful study and application of God's Word in the individual life. The lives of many believers today demonstrate that too much shallow Bible reading and study is being done.

The Church belongs to God; and He has established standards for her, including qualified leadership (I Timothy 3:1-14) and discipline (Matthew 18:15-19), as well as separation (2 Corinthians 6:14-17). We are instructed by God, not man, to have no fellowship (in any spiritual endeavor) with apostates (Romans 16:17-19; II John. 7-11) or disobedient brethren (II Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15). Apparently God's people have forgotten that one becomes like those with whom he associates (II

Chronicles 19:2; Galatians 2:12-14; I Timothy 5:22).

There is no less a call by God to holiness for Christian agencies, schools and their employees or representatives than there is for the Church. The Church is made up of God's people, as are these para-church agencies; but today some churches and agencies are co-mingling with apostates and disobedient brethren. Some schools have interactions with godless people as though they are exempt from being "holy unto the Lord." God does not bless disobedient brethren who violate His word.

Be it therefore resolved, that we, the members of the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America meeting in Shipshewana, Indiana, June 26-28, 2012, call upon one other to be diligent in our Bible study and application to our personal lives, faithful to the Lord by submitting ourselves afresh daily to Him and careful in our associations, seeking fellowship only with those of like-precious faith and practice in accordance with the Word of God. We re-commit ourselves to live in holiness unto the Lord, to lead by example and to teach the whole counsel of God, including the precepts of holiness.